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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002092

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SUBJECT: TURKEY WARY BUT CALM ON TERRORIST PKK ANNIVERSARY

REF: ANKARA 2043 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: ADCM Dan Sreebny for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: August 15 marks the 23rd anniversary of the PKK's first attacks against the Turkish state in 1984. While GOT security forces are on alert today, violence remains at a lower level than last year and domestic pressure to conduct a cross border operation into northern Iraq has dropped. The GOT was encouraged by Iraqi PM Maliki's commitment to work with it to end the PKK presence in Iraq, and further concrete progress toward that end will strengthen this trend. END SUMMARY

12. (C) Turkish security forces are on alert for possible PKK attacks today, the 23rd anniversary of the Kurdish group's armed insurrection against the Turkish state. The level of violence has increased slightly since the relative lull leading up to Turkey's July 22 parliamentary election. Since then, at least 10 security personnel have died and 28 have been wounded. PKK casualties have also increased in recent weeks, with at least 16 terrorists killed and 11 more captured or surrendered. Most security force casualties continue to be caused by remotely detonated land mines on roads in Turkey's southeast.

13. (C) Despite the uptick in clashes, calls for a CBO into northern Iraq against PKK bases have subsided for the moment. Turkey's focus on upcoming presidential elections has lowered the temperature a bit, as has the lack of a major PKK attack. PM Maliki's August 7 Ankara visit and his commitment to cooperate with the GOT to end PKK activities in northern Iraq provided additional breathing space for the re-elected Justice and Development Party (AKP).

14. (C) Results from the parliamentary election indicated a wavering in support for the PKK, as the ruling AKP made significant inroads into traditional PKK strongholds. The entrance into parliament of pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) members strengthens the prospects for dialogue and could also further dilute PKK control in the region. PKK representatives have responded to these developments with a variety of approaches. In an August 9 statement, PKK leader Murat Karayilan claimed the group wants to resolve the Kurdish problem in Turkey without bloodshed, through peaceful

means. However, an August 14 statement from a PKK spokesman warned Maliki and the GOI not to interfere in the group's conflict with Turkey lest it pay the price by seeing its own political crisis deepen. Further concrete steps in GOI-GOT cooperation against the PKK will be a key factor in ensuring future progress along a non-CBO path to deal with this terrorist organization.

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